

In a Tough Economy, “Artist Magnet” Brings LA’s Theatre World Together

By Aycil Yeltan

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As LA theatres struggle to stay afloat and theatre artists look for work, “Artist Magnet” is becoming a draw for theatre networking online and monthly theatre networking parties at trendy LA wine bars.

As the uncertain economy takes a hit on many LA theatres, local artists, producers, managers, and theatre companies are migrating to “Artist Magnet” (AM). AM is an online social network exclusively for theatre artists, allowing theatres and members to create profiles, upload pictures and videos, share events and blogs, and even link to their Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter accounts. In addition, AM hosts monthly networking parties where artists can get together with theatre directors and producers, mingle, share business cards, show information and most importantly, try to talk their way into an audition.

AM was developed in May, 2008 by a group LA actors, directors, producers, and web programmers interested in creating a network capable of connecting the theatre industry similarly to IMDb’s network for film and TV industry professionals. As the global economy collapsed last fall, grants and funding for theatres dried up as box-office sales dwindled, and theatres struggled to survive as theatre actors looked for work in an increasingly shrinking job market. At the beginning of 2009, theatre artists in LA and around the world began joining the AM network to find work; theatres followed in April, and now AM maintains profiles of over 100 theatres and 1,300 members in LA, across the US and over 50 countries worldwide.

Last month, on Monday, April 6, AM held its first networking party for LA theatre artists at the Ma’Kai Lounge in Santa Monica. During the party, representatives from the new LATC, the City Garage, and the Celebration Theatre spoke with artists and fans about opportunities for work and networking through AM. In addition, AM hosted a similar networking party the same night at the Shrine in Manhattan, NY, and gave NY and LA artists the opportunity to chat and network with each other online. Many attendees were interested in making the networking party a monthly event, so AM will host a second party at the Salute Wine Bar in Santa Monica this Friday evening.

Artists and theatres are drawn to AM’s exclusive dedication to all things theatre, its weekly online Radio Show, which features notable artists, contest winners, and members’ Radio Plays, its group pages for each type of artist, including managers, producers, and theatre companies, and of course the fact that it’s free to join and use. On AM, directors can post a blog about their latest show or newest website, playwrights can send a message to producers with a link to a sample of their play on Google docs, and theatre companies can post casting notices in a group dedicated to actors.

During these difficult economic times, when social networking and media is overlooking the special needs of theatre artists, AM is increasingly becoming an online haven for the theatre world. After joining AM in March, southern California theatre composer and producer of the Broadway Babies Creative Group, A. Michael Storm, blogged, “The first time I sat foot in a Broadway theatre more than 40 years ago... I was engulfed by the feeling of the spirits of all the artists... the magic of the Theatre seemed to wash over me... I am feeling some of that same magic here at Artist Magnet.”

Despite AM’s current value to the theatre community, its online network is merely a support network for the much larger concept of artistmagnet.com, which aims to connect millions of theatre artists through hyperlinking resumes and pages featuring every past, current and upcoming theatrical production and theatre venue in the world. AM’s new website launch is expected later this year.

About Artist Magnet:

Artist Magnet – conceived and developed in May, 2008 by LA actor, director and producer, Dave Mack - is an international online social network for the theatre world, with the vision of connecting artists and fans through shows and venues everywhere.

Artist Magnet’s next Theatre party will be Friday, May 15 starting at 10pm at the “Salute Wine Bar” in Santa Monica. Details and tickets are available at <http://artistmagnetla.eventbrite.com>.

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